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19 July 1969

State Department review completed

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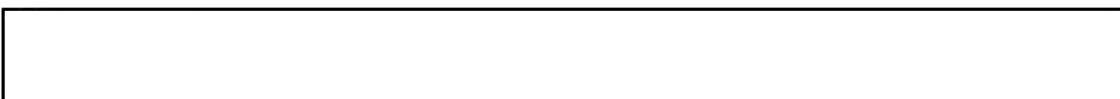
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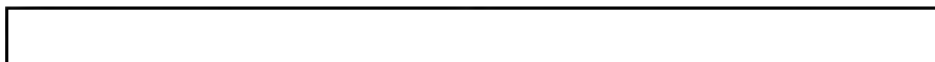
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【 South Vietnam: Communist forces conducted a number of small-scale strikes on 17-18 July, but activity fell far short of representing a new "high-point."】

In the Hue area, the enemy mounted a series of raids against South Vietnamese regular and paramilitary positions, suffering considerably heavier losses than the government troops. Two enemy 122-mm. rockets hit the outskirts of Hue yesterday, causing no casualties or damage. Two additional ground attacks against an allied convoy in Binh Long Province and against an outpost near Dak To in the highlands were largely ineffective.

There continue to be indications that the Communists plan to cap their "July action phase" with a final round of offensive actions which could begin over the weekend. (Map) 】【

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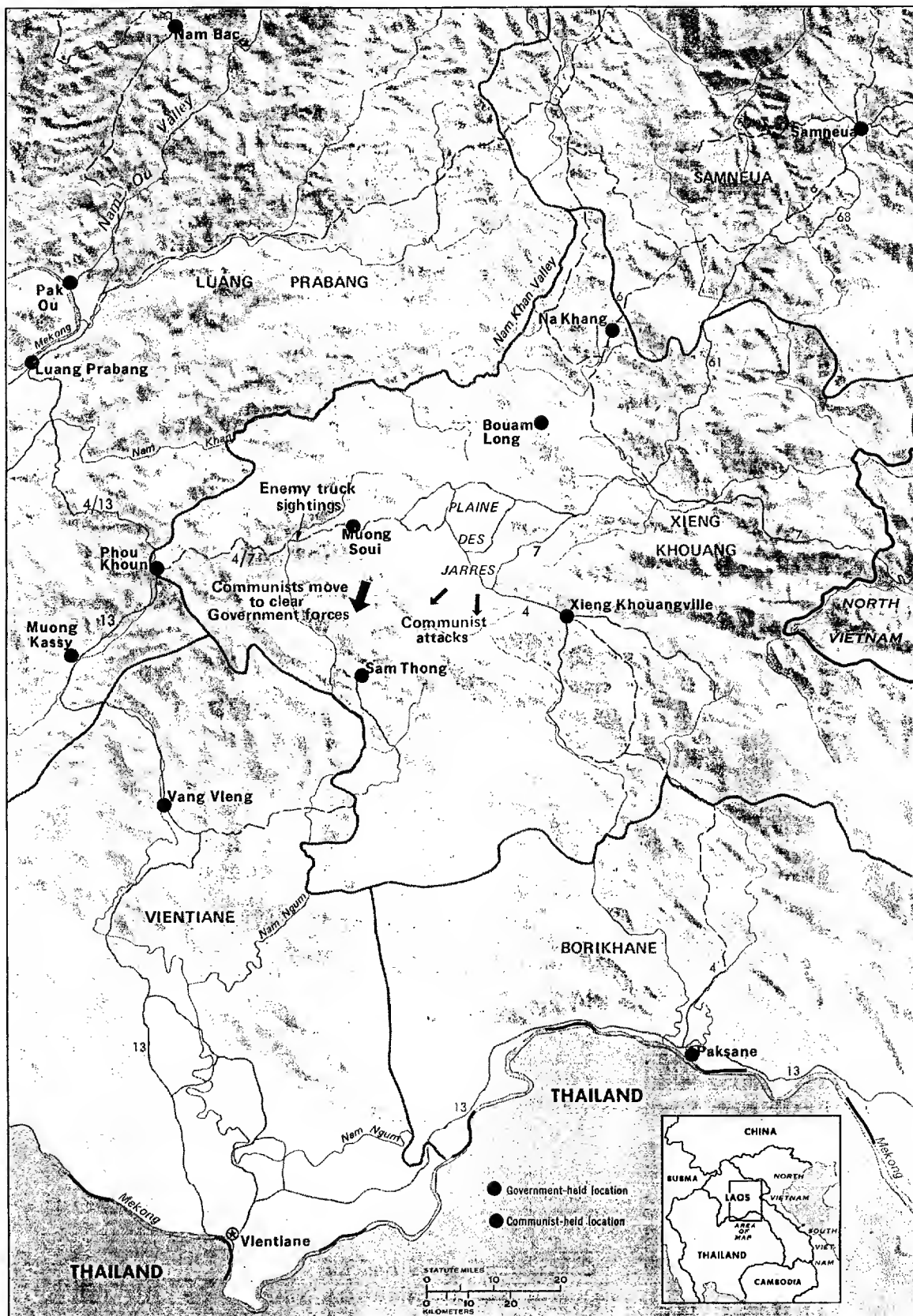
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LAOS: Current Situation



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Laos: There are signs that Communist forces may be moving to expand their holdings in the Plaine des Jarres area.

Over the past few days the Communists have unsuccessfully tried to overrun a number of progovernment guerrilla outposts south of the Plaine. In addition, Communist forces appear to be moving to clear the remaining government elements which threaten their supply lines south of Muong Soui.

Although there has been no new fighting west of Muong Soui, there is increasing evidence of an enemy troop buildup along Route 7. Government units operating in the area observed a large number of trucks moving a few miles west of Muong Soui in mid-July.

Meanwhile, King Savang, with unusual forcefulness, has tried to bolster the depressed Lao military leadership. Reacting sharply against the government's alarmist views of the military situation, the King urged the military to stop sulking and move to strengthen defenses at the junction of routes 7 and 13 at Phou Khoun. Loss of this road junction would deny the government overland access to the royal capital of Luang Prabang via Route 13.

(Map)

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Chile: Radomiro Tomic's campaign for the presidential nomination of the Christian Democratic Party received a boost on 17 July when it was announced that he had been offered the party's nomination and had accepted.

After a meeting with party leaders, Tomic reportedly told newsmen that his nomination would be "ratified" by a national party meeting on 15 August. A leading moderate Christian Democrat believes that the August meeting not only will nominate Tomic but will allow him to seek allies in other political parties.

Tomic's campaign has been punctuated by statements that he would not run for president unless his candidacy were supported by a broad leftist grouping including Communists and the more extreme left Socialists. Since these parties have rebuffed his overtures, he may have decided to run alone as a Christian Democrat, hoping to pick up other support later in the campaign.

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Czechoslovakia: Despite the party's heavy pressure for conformity, most intellectuals and journalists are still resisting.

Progressive journalists in Prague have issued a statement which Rude Pravo, the principal party daily, has condemned as "adventurism, irresponsibility, and anti-Sovietism"--in effect ostracizing these journalists. The statement also incurred the censure of the moderate leadership of the Czech journalists' union for taking a militant position.

Only 500 of some 1,800 Czech journalists have joined a regime-sponsored professional organization. In addition, the Czech--as distinct from the Slovak--writers' union that was organized only last month, has rejected censorship and has endorsed the continuation in office of the ultraliberal president-in-exile of the federal writers' union, Eduard Goldsteucker. It adopted a charter which commits it to defend the work and social interests of its members and to reject political criteria for membership.

The Czech union apparently wants none of the passivity of its sister organizations, the Czechoslovak and Slovak writers' unions. The Czech union responded to the ban of the liberal literary journal, Listy, by indicating, apparently without regime approval, that it will publish an ostensibly "for-members-only" bulletin beginning in September. The union also intends to work closely with the workers and students, an alliance that could constitute a numerically significant opposition to the Husak leadership.

Reimposition of censorship and retributive personnel measures have silenced the outspoken mass media, but Czechoslovak writers have a long tradition of defying authority. For example, the speeches

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of dissidents at a writers' union congress in mid-1967 contributed to the downfall of orthodox party boss Antonin Novotny six months later.

Husak, who is an intellectual himself, participated in the onslaught against Novotny and realizes that to maintain a stable regime, he must find a solution that will prevent effective widespread opposition from the writers. At the same time, he must keep the mass media from arousing the Soviets' ire.



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[El Salvador - Honduras: A cease-fire was ordered by both sides beginning at midnight on 18 July, but there is doubt that it will be effective.

The OAS mission has been outraged at Salvadoran backsliding on earlier promises of compliance. Salvadoran President Sanchez' speech to the nation last night sounded no note of compromise and will add to Honduran skepticism of Salvadoran intentions. The Honduran foreign minister yesterday expressed his conviction that the Salvadoran Army was regrouping for a last dramatic thrust into Honduras before accepting OAS proposals. The Guatemalan ambassador in El Salvador believes that El Salvador has no intention of withdrawing from Honduras, and that inter-American sanctions will be necessary to force Salvadoran compliance.

Honduran President Lopez made an urgent call to President Somoza of Nicaragua for material assistance, which Somoza says he will give if no firm agreement is in effect by early this morning.

Honduras is concerned over the effect of Salvadoran propaganda, particularly exhortations to Salvadoran residents in Honduras to organize a fifth column and stand by for orders to sabotage. The Honduran foreign minister fears this propaganda effort will stimulate widespread vigilante violence against Salvadorans in Honduras.

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South Korea: President Pak, while avoiding any personal commitment, has given further encouragement to a movement that seeks to remove the constitutional bar to his running for a third term. In a speech commemorating the 21st anniversary of the South Korean constitution on 17 July, Pak pointedly reminded his countrymen that social systems and constitutions are subject to "constant reforms" to meet changing realities. The South Korean prime minister told the US ambassador that much care and effort went into wording Pak's statement, presumably to give one more stamp of legitimacy to the amendment movement.

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Bolivia: A confrontation between General Ovando and President Siles was averted, at least temporarily, when the mayor of La Paz, retired General Armando Escobar, banned political demonstrations favoring his candidacy in next year's presidential elections. Reports that demonstrations were planned for 16 July had angered Ovando, who believes that Siles is pushing Escobar's candidacy. Escobar probably realized he was in a particularly vulnerable position because of the Ovando-Siles feud and decided on a temporary tactical withdrawal rather than hurt his chances by challenging Ovando at this time.

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Nicaragua: The deaths of two students who were shot by the national guard during demonstrations on 16 July will probably spark further disorders involving both university and high school students. The students were protesting the national guard's killing of five members of a Castro-oriented Communist terrorist group, several of whom had participated in the robbery of the Bank of America in Managua last year. The university in Leon has suspended classes, and the university in Managua has closed down completely in the hope of averting further disorders. The US Embassy, however, believes the closing will only make matters worse.

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Italy: Prime Minister Rumor is making some progress in his effort to re-form a Christian Democratic - Socialist coalition but there is no immediate prospect of success. At issue now is the right-wing Unitary Socialists' insistence on a strong anti-Communist statement by the new government. The orthodox Socialists oppose a coalition or government collaboration with the Communists but will not agree to reject in advance all Communist amendments to government-sponsored reform legislation. Rumor is seeking a formula to paper over the dispute. [REDACTED]

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Sudan: Between 120 and 200 alleged antiregime plotters have been arrested by the Khartoum government. There have been scattered reports of dissatisfaction with the new military government, and this roundup appears to be aimed chiefly at curbing second-level political activists; most of the principal antiregime leaders are already in jail. US and West German "imperialists" are being blamed for the so-called counterrevolutionary activity; this is in keeping with the government's close association with "socialist" elements both at home and abroad. [REDACTED]

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